

A NEW ALOE FROM SOUTHERN RHODESIA

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(With Plate XIV)

Aloe plowesii Reynolds. Species nova in Sect. *Leptoaloe*, *A. wildii* Reynolds affinis, foliis rosulatis carinatis, bracteis et pedicellis magis longioribus facile distinguitur.

Radices fusiformes. *Folia* ca. 10, rosulata, anguste linearia, glauco-viridia, 20—30 cm. longa, 6—10 mm. lata, sensim attenuata, suberecta vel patula; *supra* canaliculata; *subtus* carinata, supra basin minute albomaculata; marginibus dentibus albidis 5 mm. longis ciliata.

Inflorescentia simplex, 30—45 cm. alta. *Pedunculus* 8 mm. crassus, bracteis vacuis 6—8 ovato-acutis semiamplexicaulibus praeditus. *Racemus* cylindrico-conicus, usque 10 cm. longus, 6 cm. latus. *Bracteae* ovato-acutae, c. 15 mm. longae, 7 mm. latae, 3—5-nervatae. *Pedicelli* 30 mm. longi. *Peranthium* cylindrico-trigonum, coccineum, apice viridulum, 30—35 mm. longum, basi breviter stipitatum, circa ovarium 8 mm. diam.; *segmenta exteriora* libera, *interiora* carinata. *Antherae* 1—2 mm. exsertae. *Stigma* demum 2—3 mm. exsertum. *Ovarium* viridulum, 7 mm. longum, 2.5 mm. diametro. (Plate XIV).

SOUTHERN RHODESIA. Chimanimani Mts., along tootpath to Mountain Club Hut among sandstone boulders in short grass, alt. 5,000'—5,800', fl. 14 Oct. 1962, DCH Plowes 2273 Type (SRGH); Oct. 1960, Plowes 1213 (SRGH); Chimanimani Mtns., fl. August 1947, Munch 8, (SRGH 32424); Gully above upper Haroni, rocky grassland, 4,800—5,000 ft., fl. 3 Feb. 1957, J. B. Phipps 447 (SRGH); Plant coll. Plowes along track to Mountain Club Hut, cult. Mbabane, Swaziland, very robust form, fl. 12 December 1963, Plowes et Reynolds 10049 (PRE).

MOCAMBIQUE: Manica, Sofala, Chimanimani Mts., fl. 9 July 1949, Pedro et Pedrogão 7393! (PRE) appears to belong here.

Along the Chimanimani Mountains in the Melsetter District of Southern Rhodesia there are two species of "grass" Aloe that have been confused for many years. Both grow near each other in grass, both flower at the same time (mostly September—October) and have similar simple inflorescences, but differ considerably in leaves. One has 6—8 leaves that are 10—15 mm. broad and

distichous; this is *A. wildii* (Reynl.) Reynolds which was originally wrongly described as a variety of *A. torrei* Verdorn et Christian.

The second closely resembles *A. myriacantha* (Haw.) R & S in general habit of growth with leaves that are rosulate, narrowly linear and 6 mm. broad, keeled and basally much dilated and imbricate-amplexicaul. The flowers resemble those of *A. wildii* but have larger bracts and longer pedicels, and bear no resemblance whatever to those of *A. myriacantha*.

This new species is now named after Mr. D. C. H. Plowes of Umtali, S. Rhodesia, who has contributed much to the advancement of botanical knowledge in S. Rhodesia. He was the first to bring this new species to my notice, and I am indebted to him for plants of both species, which enable the differences to be established. Mr. Plowes found plants on the Chimanimanis growing among sandstone boulders in short grass at the head of Dead Cow Gulch and along the path to the Mountain Club Huts in association with *A. wildii*, from 5,000 ft. to 5,800 ft. There are two forms (a) a weaker form growing in grass with leaves shorter, narrower and more erect, and (b) a more robust form growing in more exposed positions with leaves broader and longer, the whole plant being much larger. Both forms have flowered in Mbabane, Swaziland, which enabled the description to be completed. The plant figured here is a very robust cultivated growth form of the species, and is much larger than occurs wild.

DESCRIPTION

Plant small, acaulescent, with fusiform roots. *Leaves* about 10, rosulate, basally dilated and imbricate-amplexicaul near ground level, narrowly linear, 20—30 cm. long, 6—10 mm. broad, gradually narrowing to an acute apex, suberect to spreading; *upper surface* dull green, canaliculate, with a few scattered spots in lower portion; *lower surface* carinate, dull green, with numerous crowded small white spots low down; *margins* with minute .5 mm. long white teeth that are slightly larger and closer low down, smaller, more distant and obsolescent upwards.

Inflorescence simple, 30—45 cm. tall. *Peduncle* 8 mm. thick, with 6—8 sterile bracts that are ovate-acute, long-pointed, 6 mm. broad, 15—20 mm. long, 3—5-nerved.

Raceme cylindric-conical, up to 10 cm. long, 6 cm. diam., the apical buds denser and at first hidden by imbricate bracts, open flowers cernuous to nutant.

Bracts the lowest clasping the pedicel, ovate-acute when pressed flat and about 15 mm. long, 7 mm. broad, 3—5-nerved.

Pedicels 30 mm. long, the colour of the perianth. *Perianth* scarlet, paler to greenish at mouth, cylindric-trigonus, 30—35 mm. long, basally obtuse and shortly stipitate, 8 mm. diam. across the ovary; *outer segments* free to base, greenish at apex, obscurely 3—5-nerved; *inner segments* slightly broader than



FIG. 1. *Aloe plowessii* Reynolds.

Plant from track to Mountain Club Hut, Chimanimani Mts., Melsetter Dist., S. Rhodesia, cult. Mbabane, Swaziland, fl. 12 Dec. 1963, height 45 cm.—A very robust cultivated form, larger than occurs wild.



FIG. 2. *Aloe plowessii* Reynolds.

Flowers natural size.

PLATE XIV.

the outer with a scarlet keel throughout, the apices broader and more spreading than the outer; *filaments* filiform-flattened, very pale lemon the 3 inner narrower and lengthening before the 3 outer with their *Anthems* in turn exserted 1—2 mm. *Stigma* at length exserted 2 mm. *Ovary* green, 7 mm. long, $2\frac{1}{2}$ mm. diam.

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